

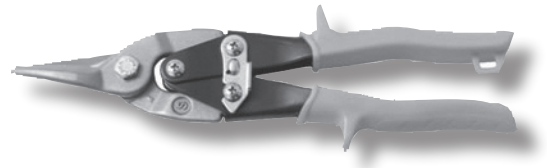
Snips for Cutting Sheet Metal

The Problem

Cutting sheet metal with snips takes a lot of hand force. You often need to work with your wrist in an awkward position. If you do this work often or for long periods of time, you may experience hand or wrist pain. Eventually you may develop a serious injury.

Using the wrong snip for the job increases your chance of injury. Snips come in many shapes and sizes. Manufacturers produce different snips for specific tasks and specific workers. If you use left-cut snips to do a right-cut task, your hand and wrist will be in a stressful position and you will have to use more force. If you cut sheet metal that is thicker than the snip manufacturer recommends, more force will also be necessary. If you use dull snips, they will make your work even harder.

Problem: All-purpose snips are not suitable for every job



One solution: Tapping into duct using upright snip

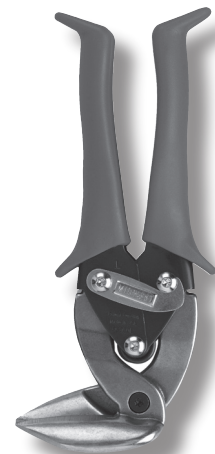


One Solution

Use the **right size and type of snip** for the task. New types of snips are available that may fit your hand better, keep your wrist straighter, and require less hand force.

Any snip you use should be sharp and tight. Do not use dull or damaged snips. Where necessary use compound snips, which provide much more power. Some compound snips will increase your hand strength by 12 times. Electric snips are usually best when you need to make many cuts.

Most snips are made for cutting soft metal only. For hard metal, you should use other cutting tools designed for that purpose.



How It Works

Improvements found in the newer snips include less space between the handles, soft grips and curved handles. Using a curved handle can help keep your wrist straight. A soft grip lowers the pressure on your hand and fingers. When the space between handles is less, you may be able to get a better grip on the tool. An upright snip can help keep your wrist straighter when working in confined areas or overhead.

No pair of snips will work well for every task. Decide what the job requires and select the correct snips. Manufacturers make specific snips for left and right cuts, straight cuts, and wide or tight curved cuts. There are specific snips for different gauges of sheet metal. Different snips are made to fit left- and right-handed workers.

Pay attention to the manufacturer's specifications. Manufacturers color-code snip handles for the type of cut they make—yellow for straight, green for right, and red for left. Use snips that fit both your hand and the job you do, either left-handed or right-handed. Always wear eye protection when using snips.

Benefits for the Worker and Employer

Choosing the correct snips should make the job easier. Your hand and wrist should be less tired, and less likely to be injured. You also should be able to get the job done faster.

Approximate Cost

The best snip for the job should not cost much more than other snips. Newer snips are often between \$10–40.

For More Information

- Products related to this solution are described at www.cpwr.com/simple.html. Products also may be found on the internet using the following search terms: “aviation snips” + “ergonomic design.”
- Local contractor tool and equipment suppliers or rental companies may be another source of information on products.
- For general information on this solution, check www.cpwrconstructionsolutions.org and www.elcosh.org.